

As you know, we are currently faced with the very real possibility of a federal government shutdown. In the past few weeks I have voted several times to fund the government and prevent this from occurring. Yesterday, I voted twice to prevent a shutdown, and last year I voted for a full-year funding bill that would have allowed congress to focus on job creation.

It is unfortunate that we have yet to arrive at a deal to fund the services, on which millions of citizens rely, for the remainder of the fiscal year. Along with Democrats in Congress and the White House, I have made a good faith effort to negotiate with Congressional Republicans to avoid a shutdown.

While I believe we must reduce the deficit, I disagree with the Republican approach. Instead of cutting college aid, Head Start, low income heating assistance, food aid for new moms through WIC and investments in job training, renewable energy and infrastructure, we need to make government more efficient, cut waste, fraud and abuse and end special tax earmarks that allow big corporations, Big Oil companies and the wealthiest to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the current efforts to prevent a shutdown is that congressional Republicans have chosen to play politics - demanding several ideologically driven "riders" that make it impossible for a deal to be reached. These are special provisions that have nothing to do with the budget or the deficit. These riders would do things like deny funding for women's health care and family planning clinics, cut National Public Radio and stop the EPA from enforcing the Clean Air Act. I voted against these provisions, and most Americans believe they have no place in a debate over shutting down the government. Nevertheless, they have become a sticking point for those on the far right.

My staff and I are working hard to avoid a shutdown of our government, and we are prepared to answer any questions you may have should a shutdown occur. If you need assistance or encounter any problems in dealing with federal agencies or parts of the federal government during a shutdown, please feel free to contact my offices and we will do the best we can to help.

In the event of a shutdown, many critical services like Social Security, postal services and homeland security would not be affected. On the other hand, a host of agencies that you may rely on will be affected.

### **These critical services would not cease:**

- Social Security checks for seniors, people with disabilities and survivors would still go out. But new Social Security applications will likely not be processed during any shutdown, as during in the previous shutdowns.

- Troops would continue to serve, though their pay could be put on hold.
- Critical homeland security functions such as border security would continue.
- The Postal Service, which is self-funded, will continue to operate.
- The FAA would keep the air traffic control system open and safe.

### **However, some services would likely be affected:**

- Unemployment benefits: The federal funds that help states pay the costs of their unemployment programs could be affected depending on the length of the shutdown.

- Veterans' services: While VA hospitals will remain open, veterans' benefits could be delayed or reduced, as was the case during the last shutdown.

- National parks: National parks and the National Wildlife Refuge Systems would be among the first places to close if the government shuts down.

- Passports: Passport and visa applications will not be processed. In the 1996 shutdown, over 200,000 passport applications and 30,000 daily visa applications went unprocessed.

- IRS processing of tax refunds for some returns would be suspended.

- FHA new home loan guarantees may cease.

- SBA approval of applications for business loan guarantees and direct loans to small businesses would likely cease, impacting the engines of our economy and potentially slowing the economic recovery.

- Farm loans and farm payments would cease.

- Museums: National museums, including the Smithsonian Institution, would close in the event of a government shutdown.

- Access to the U.S. Capitol: Guide and staff-led tours of the Capitol will be cancelled. The House Gallery will remain open.

As I mentioned, my offices will be fully operational. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need assistance.